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Canyon principal

post Pizza. And every Tuesday night, an empty seat is hard to find at Lamppost Pizza.

"We often outnumber the home crowd at away games," Canyon principal Dr. Bill White said. "I think our program brings a sense of pride to our community."

The Crow family has lived in Canyon Country since 1963 and have been watching the Cowboys since the early '70s. "I remember going to games when I was 8 or 9," said Rick Crow, now 26.

Rick and his brother Greg, 28, both played football at Canyon and can be found, along with their parents, at almost every Canyon game.

"You go up there and sit with the same people every week," said Rick. "It's like a date."

Greg Milleman, 25, is a newcomer to the Santa Clarita Valley. He moved to Canyon Country from Winnetka three months ago, but he's already discovered the Cowboys.

experienced a losing season in the Welch era. So why do the Cowboys keep winning year after year?

"I think that's an easy question — Harry Welch," said Saugus coach Dick Flaherty, a former Welch assistant. "He has a philosophy of what it takes to be successful and he doesn't waver from that, ever."

An important part of Welch's philosophy is working hard in practice and being the best conditioned team on the field.

"Every one of our practices is serious," Welch said. "We don't tolerate anything less than a total effort."

If a player slacks off, he can be assured of a closeup view of a screaming Welch grabbing his face mask.

"You know when you screw up and he's staring you right in the face," McCune said. "You know it's coming, so you kind of shy away. After that, you don't screw up anymore."

Coaches aren't the only ones who grab face masks. If a player makes a mistake, teammates will often take the responsibility of correcting it. One player yelling at a teammate or grabbing his shoulder pads is a common occurrence in Cowboy practices and games. Welch calls it "peer pressure."

"Peer pressure is so important

Joe Zacharia, a linebacker on all three of Canyon's Northwestern Conference championship teams, is one of Welch's most ardent supporters.

"I loved playing for Coach Welch," said Zacharia, who now plays for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "You want to win for him. He's a tremendous person to be around. . .he's like a father figure. Who doesn't want to see their dad win 46 games in a row?"

Zacharia sat out the season after blowing out his knee against Baylor in the season opener.

"I thought about Coach Welch a lot and what he'd do if it happened to him," Zacharia said. "He always tries to find something good in the bad. Like I blew my knee out, now I get an extra year to get my education and get my degree."

The Canyon players just have to endure one more practice this season before playing the final game of the season — the Division II championship game — Saturday at Antelope Valley High. It's the game many of them have been dreaming about since their days at Sierra Vista.

"If we have less points than AV, but give a good accounting of ourselves," Welch said, "you won't hear an angry voice."

That's Cowboy football.